A

SERMON

Preach'd at the Pariſh Church of

St. DUNSTAN *in the Weſt,*

ON

Thurſday, MARCH the 8th 170⅘.

BEING THE

Anniverſary DAY

OF

Her MAJESTY's Happy Acceſſion to the THRONE.

PROV. XXIV. 21.

My Son, Fear thou the Lord and the King; and meddle not with them that are given to Change.

By *Ofspring Blackall*, D. D. Chaplain in Ordinary to Her Majeſty, Now Biſhop of EXON.

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Sach. 413/2

PROV. XXIV. 21.

My Son, Fear thou the Lord and the King; and meddle not with them that are given to Change.

I Know not how to begin a Diſcourſe upon this Subject better, than in thoſe Words wherewith the Judicious Mr. *Hooker* begins his Learned Diſcourſe of the *Laws of Eccleſiaſtical Polity*: 'He (*ſays he*) that 'goes about to perſwade a Multitude that they are not ſo well govern'd as 'they ought to be, ſhall never want attentive and favourable Hearers; 'becauſe they know the manifold Defects whereunto every Kind of Regi-'ment is ſubject, but the ſecret Lets and Difficulties, which in Publick Pro-'ceedings are innumerable and inevitable, they have not ordinarily the 'Judgment to conſider. And becauſe ſuch as openly reprove ſuppoſed Diſ-'orders of State, are taken for principal Friends to the common Benefit of 'all, and for Men that carry ſingular Freedom of Mind; under this fair 'and plauſible Colour, whatſoever they utter paſſes for good and currant; 'that which is wanting in the Weight of their Speech being ſupplied by 'the Aptneſs of Mens Minds to accept and believe it. Whereas, on the o-'ther ſide, if we maintain things that are eſtabliſh'd, we have not only to 'ſtrive with a Number of heavy Prejudices deeply rooted in the Hearts of 'Men, who think that herein we ſerve the Time, and ſpeak in Favour of 'the preſent State, becauſe thereby we either hold or ſeek Preferment; 'but alſo to bear ſuch Exceptions as Minds ſo averted before hand uſually 'take againſt that which they are loth ſhould be pour'd into them.

But what would not be ſo well taken from me, will, I hope, be better taken when coming out of the Mouth of a very Wiſe Man; and ſuch an One, you will ſurely all acknowledge *Solomon* to have been. And *He* it was, ('twas he who excell'd in wiſdom all that were before him, and all that have liv'd ſince;) or rather, it was *Wiſdom* it ſelf ſpeaking by his Mouth, which has given this Advice in the Text, which I would now perſwade you to follow: *My Son, fear thou the Lord and the King; and meddle not with them that are given to Change.*

Concerning which it may be firſt obſerv'd in general, that it is given here as a *Father*'s Advice to his *Son*; *My Son, fear thou the Lord and the King*; and from hence we may reaſonably conclude that it is very good Advice, and that to follow it will be very much for our own Profit and Advantage; For that's the only End that a Father has in the Counſel and Inſtruction that he gives his Son; he never means any thing by it but this Son's Good; he never adviſes his Son to any thing but what he thinks it will be for his Intereſt to do: And whenever he uſhers in any Advice in ſuch Manner as this here is introduc'd, with a ſolemn and particular Compellation, ſerving to excite and fix the Attention to what follows; *My Son*, do this; or, *My Son*, do that; it is very reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that he judges the Advice which he is then about to give to be matter of the greateſt Uſefulneſs and Importance; 'tis a ſign that 'tis what he would have his Son take a ſpecial Regard to, and be very careful to obſerve. And

ſuch

ſuch is, moſt manifeſtly, the Counſel which the Wiſe Father here gives to his Son; it is concerning Matters of the Higheſt Importance, and of the neareſt Concern to every Man; *My Son, Fear thou the Lord, and the King, and meddle not with them that are given to Change.*

I. For that the firſt Branch of this Advice is ſuch, will, I ſuppoſe, be readily granted by all, *My Son, fear thou the Lord*; For *the Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Wiſdom*; The Fear of *God* induces and comprehends our whole Duty to him; if we fear *God* as we ought to do, and as a good Son fears his Father, we ſhall readily obey him in every Command that he lays upon us. Nay, this comprehends all our Duty not only to *God*, but to Men too, to whom we are to perform all the Offices of our Relation to them for *God's* ſake, and out of a Principle of Conſcience and Obedience to *God*. Of this *Fear* of *God* then we may ſay, as our *Saviour* does of the *Love* of *God*, (and we may truly ſay it, for indeed the Love of *God* and the Fear of *God* are in Subſtance the ſame) that it is *the firſt and great Commandment*; which if we are careful to keep according to its true and comprehenſive Meaning, we ſhall be deficient in no Part of Duty.

II. But the Second Branch of the Wiſe Fathers Advice to his Son is alſo, next to the former, of the higheſt Importance and of the neareſt Concern, *Fear the King*; *My Son, Fear thou the Lord, and the King*: By which is meant, that our next Care to that of keeping a good Conſcience towards *God*, ſhould be that of behaving our ſelves orderly and regularly in that Station which *God* has plac'd us in of Subornation and Subjection to thoſe Men that are ſet over us by *God* with a Power to order and enact ſuch Conſtitutions (only not contrary to the Divine Laws) as are neceſſary to conſerve Juſtice and Peace in that Society over which they preſide: *Fear the King*, that is, 'Obey him, keep his Laws, and behave thy ſelf in all things 'as a dutiful Subject towards him; Or if thou canſt not with a good Con-'ſcience obey his Commands, yet do not dare to reſiſt his Authority. If what 'he commads be lawful, do readily as thou art commanded: Or if it be 'not lawful, (which may ſometimes be; for the Laws of Men are not al-'ways agreeable to the Laws of *God*) yet even in that Caſe thou art not 'diſcharged from thy Subjection to him for when thou canſt not obey, 'tho muſt ſubmit; and that not only becauſe thou canſt not help it, but 'altho' thou couldſt; if thou canſt not do as he bids thee, thou muſt take 'patiently the Puniſhment that is impos'd upon the for thy diſobedience.

This is the Duty of Subjects to their Governors, as it is briefly taught in the Text, *Fear the King*; and more largely in other Places of holy Scripture; as in *Eccleſ.* 8. 2. *I counſel thee to keep the Kings Commandment, and that in regard of the Oath of* GOD: in *Rom.* 13. *Let every Soul be ſubject unto the Higher Powers; For their is no Power but of* GOD; *the Powers that be are ordained of* GOD. *Whoſoever therefore reſiſteth the Power, reſiſteth the Ordinance of* GOD, *and they that reſiſt ſhall receive to themſelves Damnation —— Wherefore ye muſt needs be ſubject not only for Wrath, but alſo for Conſcience ſake*; and in 1 Pet. 2. 13. *Submit your ſelves to every Ordinance of Man, for the Lord's ſake; whether it be to the King as Supreme, or unto Governors, as unto them that are ſent by*

him, for the Punishment of Evil-Doers, and for the Praise of them that do well. For so is the Will of GOD, that with well-doing ye may put to Silence, the Ignorance of foolish men. As free, and not using your Liberty for a Cloke of maliciousness, but as the Servants of Christ. Honour all men; Love the Brotherhood; Fear GOD, Honour the King.

This, I say, is the Duty, (as it is plainly taught in Scripture of Subjects to their Governours; that is, to them who have the Supreme Authority of the Nation to which they belong, by whatsoever Name or Title they are call'd; that is, to the *Legislative Power* in what Hands soever it is lodg'd by the particular Constitution of the Place. For there may be, and in some Countries there is, the Name and Title of a King without the Power; and there may be, and in some other Countries there is the Power of a King without the Name; Nay, there is indeed in every Country, State, Kingdom or Common wealth, the Kingly or the Supreme Power lodg'd somewhere or other, either in One, in Few, or in more Hands: This Power, I say, there is in the Government of every Nation, as well in a Democracy, or Aristocracy, as in a Monarcy; and as well in the most Limited Monarchy, as in that which is the most Arbitrary and Absolute; and I say, 'tis this *Kingly Power*, where-ever 'tis by the Constitution seated or lodg'd, that is to be fear'd and obey'd: For the Scripture only declares in general the Duties of Governors to their Subjects, and of Subjects to their Governors, but it does not expresly define or prescribe any one Form or manner of Government as necessary to be set up and preserved in all Nations; bnt leaves every Country to it self to establish that Form of Government which is most suitable to its own particular Temper and Genius. Only when any sort of Government is set up and establish'd (there being, as was said before, in every Form of Government a Kingly, that is, an Absolute and Arbitrary Power lodg'd somewhere or other, either in one Hand or in more) it then commands Obedience, and forbids Resistance to this Sovereign Power; It commands Submission to this Power, as *to the Ordinance of GOD, (for there is no Power but of GOD, and the Powers that be are ordained of GOD;)* and it declares, that they that being plac'd in Subjection to this Power do make Resistance to it, *resist the Ordinance of GOD, and shall receive to themselves Damnation.*

And thus much of the Second Branch of the Wise Man's Advice to his Son; *my Son, Fear thou the King.* But before I come to speak of the Third, *meddle not with them that are given to Change*, I think it may be of good Use to make some brief Observations upon the Two former Branches of it, consider'd as given together in the same Breath, as connected with each other, as depending one upon the other; *Fear the Lord, and the King.* And,

1. From the *Order* in which these Two Branches of his Advice are plac'd, *Fear thou the Lord, and the King*, it may be observed, that God is to be first fear'd, then the King; or that God is to be more fear'd than the King; that no Power upon Earth has Authority to make Laws contrary to the Divine Laws, or to discharge its Subjects from those Obligations which were before laid upon them by the Law of God. This is so evident, That the

Apostles

Apoſtles when they had been charg'd by the *Jewiſh Sanhedeim* to forbear Preaching in the Name of *Jeſus*, *Acts* 4. 16, 17. to do which they had before receiv' a Command from *God*, boldly appeal'd even to the Council themſelves, to judge, and declare whether in ſuch Caſe their Order ought to be obey'd; as knowing that they themſelves would not dare to affirm that a Human Law could evacuate or ſet by a contrary Law of *God*, *V.* 19. Peter *and* John *anſwered and ſaid unto them, Whether it be right in the Sight of* GOD. *to hearken unto you more than unto* GOD, *judge ye.*

2. From the Advice of Fearing and Obeying the King, being *immediately ſubjoyn'd* to that of Fearing *God*, and both being given as it were in the ſame Breath, *Fear the Lord. and the King*, it may be obſerv'd, that our higheſt Obligation next to that of Obeying *God*, is to obey and ſubmit our ſelves to thoſe whom *God* has made his Deputies and Viceroys here upon Earth: And this is the Relation wherein Earthly Kings, that is, the Sovereign Powers of every State or Nation, do ſtand to *God*. *By me Kings reign*——*By me Princes rule*; ſo we are told, *Prov.* 8. 15, 16. *The moſt High ruleth in the Kingdom of Men, and giveth it to whomſoever he will*; ſo we are taugh, *Dan.* 4. 32. And *there is no Power but of* GOD; *the Powers that be are ordained of* GOD, ſays the *Apoſtle*, *Rom.* 13. 1. And again, *He is the Miniſter of* GOD *to thee for Good*; *He is the Miniſter of* GOD, *an Avenger to execute Wrath upon him that doth Evil*, *V.* 4. And from this Relation wherein the Supreme Powers of every Nation do ſtand to *God*, they themſelves are ſometimes in Scripture called *Gods*, *Exod.* 22. 28. they are ſaid to *judge not for Man but for the Lord*, 2 *Chr.* 19. 6. and the Judgment that they give is called, GOD's *Judgment. Deut.* 1. 17. Having therefore a ſort of God like Power communicated to them by God, 'tis but fit that next to God they ſhould be had in the higheſt Honour by their Subjects, and that after the Care of Religion, the Subjects next chiefeſt Care ſhould be to behave themſelves dutifully to thoſe whom God has ſet over them, in order to preſerve Peace and Juſtice in the World, *Fear the Lord, and the King.*

3. From the *Connexion* that is made in the Text between theſe Two Duties, the *Fear* of *God* and of the *King*, it may be further obſerv'd, and moſt certainly inferr'd, that they are not Repugnant and Contradictory, nay, that they are very Conſiſtent with each other. So that a good Man may both fear God and the King too; and there can never be a Neceſſity lying upon any Man from his Obligation to diſcharge one of thoſe Duties, to neglect or tranſgreſs the other. It is not therefore true Loyalty, but Cowardice or Worldly mindedneſs that ever makes Men give up their Religion and Conſcience to the Humour of their Prince, and yield a blind Obedience without Reſerve or Exception to all his Commands, how unjuſt, how unreaſonable, how ungodly and irreligious ſoever they be; for ſuch Submiſſion as this to the Will of Princes, is a manifeſt Contradiction to the firſt Branch of the Advice here given, *Fear the Lord*. And on the other ſide. It is not true Religion and a well inform'd Conſcience, but an Ignorant and miſ-guided Zeal, or a Form of Godlineſs without the Power of it, that ever *turns Religion into Rebellion, and Faith into Faction*; that ever arms

Subjects against their Sovereign, that ever depoſes Princes, and unſettles the State, and diſturbs the Peace and Order of the World: This is as manifeſt a Contradiction to the Second Branch of the Advice, *Fear the King*; *My Son, fear thou the Lord, and the King*; we may certainly do both of theſe, or elſe both would not have been commanded. But it is a thing too evident to be deny'd, that the Laws of Princes are not always conformable to the Laws of *God* and when they are not ſo, it is impoſſible that they ſhould be both comply'd with by an Active Obedience; For, as our *Saviour* ſays, *No Man can ſerve two Maſters*; to be ſure, not Two whoſe Commands are Repugnant and Contradictory: In this Caſe therefore Subjects are not in Duty bound to do as they are commanded by their Governours; and yet neither in this Caſe does the Precept enjoining them *to fear the King* become void and of none effect, only it then ties them to an Obedience of another Sort, that is, to a Submiſſion of themſelves to ſuffer the Puniſhment of that Law which they could not with a good Conſcience yield an active Obedience to: ſtill the King, that is the Sovereign Civil Power muſt be fear'd; and he is fear'd and obey'd as much as in this Caſe he ought to be, when his Authority is not reſiſted, when *out of Conſcience towards* G O D *we endure Grief, ſuffering wrongfully*: for, (as the *Apoſtle* ſays) *hereunto are we called*; *Becauſe Chriſt alſo ſuffer'd for us, leaving us an Example that we ſhould follows his Steps*; *and ſo is the Will of* G O D, *that with well-doing we ſhould put to Silence the Ignorance of fooliſh men.* 1 Pet. 2. 21. 15. But,

4. Laſtly, What may be further obſerv'd and argu'd from the *Connexion* that ſeems to be here made between theſe Two firſt Branches of the Wiſe Man's Advice, *My Son, Fear thou the Lord, and the King*, is this; That Religion towards *God* is the beſt and ſureſt Ground of Loyalty and due Obedience to the King; He that fears *God* as he ought to do, will alſo fear the King for *God*'s ſake, and becauſe *God* has commanded him ſo to do; his Loyalty will be a Part of his Religion; and he, for the ſame Reaſon for which he will be ever at all Loyal, will be always ſo; But he that honours his Prince upon any other Principle, will honour him no more, nor no longer than while he finds his own Intereſt in it; He flatters his King, but he is no true Friend to him; He ſerves him only for Reward, and will be as ready to betray as to ſerve him when he can get more by that than by this.

III. And now I come to ſpeak of the Third Branch of the Wiſe Father's Advice to his Son; *Meddle not with them that are given to Change.* In Order to the Explication of which it may be needful to enquire, 1. Who they are that may be ſaid to be *given to Change*; and 2. What it is to *meddle* with ſuch Men.

But before I do theſe things, I thing it will be expedient, (both to prevent any Miſunderſtanding of what ſhall be ſaid, and likewiſe for ſome other good Purpoſes) to take particular Notice *who* it is that the Advice in the Text, *not to meddle with ſuch as are given to Change*, is directed to *My Son, meddle not with them that are given to Change.*

And here it may be conſider'd, that the Giver of this Advice was *Solomon*, who was himſelf King over *Iſrael*, who had himſelf the whole Kingly Power,

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in whom ſolely, and without any Partner or Sharer in the Government, the whole Sovereign Authority of the Nation, both Legiſlative and Executive, was lodg'd; For this you know was the Conſtitution among the *Jews*, the whole Sovereignty was in the King alone; Counſellors he might have, but they had no Share with him in the Legiſlature, for it was at his free Election to take their Advice or not; and what he enacted, whether with their Advice or without it, was good Law. Such a King, I ſay, was *Solomon*, who gives this Counſel, not to meddle with ſuch as are given to Change; and it is evident that he gives the Advice to *another*, not to himſelf; he gives it to *his Son*, who was a Subject, not to himſelf, who was an Abſolute and a Sovereign Prince. He gives it to the *ſame Perſon* whom, in the Clauſe juſt before, he had commanded to *fear the King*, therefore to be ſure, not to the King himſelf, but to ſuch only as were in Subjection to him.

And what I argue and Infer from hence is this, that the Advice in the Text, *not to be given to Change*, nor *to meddle with ſuch as are given to Change*, tho' as Matter of *Prudence* it may concern all, King as well as People, the Supreme Governors of a Nation, as well as thoſe who are under Government; yet as a Matter of *Duty* it can and muſt belong only to ſuch as are in Subjection, that is, only to the People and Subjects. For tho', as the *Apoſtle* ſays, *there is no Power but of* God; *and the Powers that be are ordained of* God, that is, tho' the Power which they have is a Portion of the Divine Power; yet there is no one particular Form of Government that can truly be ſaid to be of Divine Inſtitution and Appointment; and if there be not, then there is no one Form of Government but what may be chang'd and alter'd, provided that they who make the Change have ſufficient Authority to make it; and ſufficient Authority He or they muſt be allow'd to have to make any ſuch Change or Alteration in the Form and Manner of the Government, who has, or who have for the Time being the Supreme and Sovereign Authority in that Nation wherein ſuch Change is made. For the Sovereign Authority of every State or Nation (whether it be lodg'd in One Hand, or in many) is, and in the Nature of the thing muſt needs be, Abſolute, Unlimited, and Uncontroulable: That which is the Higheſt Authority in any Nation, may do what it pleaſes; and becauſe it is the Higheſt upon Earth, can be accountable to none but *God* for what it does. This Sovereign Authority therefore, I ſay, may make what Changes and Alterations it ſelf pleaſes in the Frame and Conſtitution of the Government; and whatever Changes it makes, they are Lawful and Valid, provided that no Natural Right of any other Man be thereby invaded and violated.

Suppoſing therefore Government to be founded originally in the Paternal or Patriarchal Right, yet if that ſingle Perſon in whom the whole Sovereign Power was lodg'd by this Right, either to give Eaſe to himſelf, finding the Weight of the Government too heavy for himſelf to bear alone; or to give Eaſe to his People, finding that it is with great Unwillingneſs and Reluctance that they ſubmit to be govern'd by his Sole Will and Pleaſure, or for any other good Cauſe and Conſideration him thereunto moving, ſhall think fit to call to his Aſſiſtance any of his Subjects, conſtituting them his ſtanding Council, and declaring and enacting that he will do nothing without them, and that no Act or Law of his, done without

their Approbation, ſhall be of Force and Binding to his Subjects: From this time forward the whole Frame and Conſtitution of the Government willbe clearly alter'd, and that which was before an Abſolute, will thence forward become a Limited or Mix'd Monarchy; and this Change in the Conſtitution, being made by him that had the Sovereign Power, will be Good and Valid; neither will it be Lawful for him to re-aſſume again, without Conſent of this Council, that Portion of the Sovereignty which he had before freely parted with and transferr'd to them.

And if, the Government being thus ſettl'd, the Sovereign Power for the Time being, that is, this King with his Council ſhall *both* agree to make a further Alteration in it; if they ſhall *both* agree to lay aſide their own Superiority, and to devolve the Sovereign Power that is then lodg'd in them on the People; and ſhall enact and declare, that no Law ſhall be Good and Valid, but what the Majority of the Populace ſhall agree to; by this, that Government, which was at firſt an Abſolute, and afterwards a Limited Monarchy, will become a perfect Commonwealth, and after that they ſhall have thus transferr'd the whole Government upon the People, and freely parted with their own Right to it, it will be unjuſt in them to re-aſſume this Power, any otherwiſe than by the Free Gift of the People on whom they had transferr'd it.

And, to the other ſide, the Caſe will be exactly the ſame, if it be ſuppoſed, that the Right of Government was originally in the People; for ſtill it will be capable of the like Changes and Alterations; the Sovereignty (where-ever it is lodg'd) may be alienated and parted with to others. If therefore the Sovereignty being (as is now ſuppos'd) lodg'd in the People, they, finding the Inconveniences of Numerous Popular Aſſemblies, ſhall think fit to transfer this Power to ſome few Perſons delegated and choſen by themſelves; from this time forward theſe Delegates or Repreſentatives of the People are the Supreme Power, and the People become meer Subjects to them, and may not forcibly take again to themſelves that Power which they have freely parted with. And again, If this Repreſentative Body of the People, in which the Sovereignty will be then lodg'd, finding the Inconveniences of this ſort of Government, by Reaſon of the Factions they are ſubject to, ſhall think fit to make Choice of One ſingle Perſon to preſide and moderate in their Aſſembly, with a Negative or a Caſting Vote, or with what further Degree of Power they ſhall think convenient to beſtow upon him: This is a farther Alteration of the Manner of the Government; becauſe, what Power they give him they give from themſelves, and may not challenge or claim it back again as their due, after they have freely parted with it: And when they do chooſe ſuch a Governor, they may chooſe him upon what Conditions, they may conſtitute him with what Limitations they pleaſe; they may, if they will, appoint him only for a Year, or other Limited Time; or they may, if they think that better, appoint him for Life; or they may, if they are ſo minded, order that the Power which they give him ſhall deſcend to his Heirs after him; and they may call him King, or Duke, or Statholder, or give him whatever other Title they ſhall think better. And if after this, finding Inconveniences in this mix'd ſort of Go-

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vernment, they in whom the Supreme Power is then lodg'd, that is, this King, or Duke (or whatever elſe he is call'd) with his Council or Parliament, ſhall both agree together to make a further Alteration in the Government: If they ſhall agree to transfer the whole Sovereignty to him, and he ſhall conſent to accept of it; and they do both by a ſolemn Act Decree and Ordain this Eſtabliſhment; that Government which was at firſt a Democracy, and after that a Mix'd Monarchy, will thence forward become and Abſolute Monarchy; and any of all theſe Changes or Alterations in the Form or Manner of Government, being made by ſuch as for the Time being were lawfully poſſeſs'd of the Sovereign Power, will be regularly made; and being once made, will be Valid and Binding: And in whatſoever Hands the Sovereignty ſhall be thus regularly plac'd, it can't be regularly taken from thence again but by his or their own Ceſſion or Conſent.

Thus, I think is it evident that no Change or Alteration of the Form of Government from one ſort to another, is in it ſelf unlawful to be made provided it be made by thoſe who have Power to make it; that is, by the Government it ſelf. I mean, by him or them who for the Time being have the Sovereign Power in their Hands; becauſe (as I ſaid before) there is no one Sort of Form of Government that can truly be ſaid to be of Divine Inſtitution. The Power of Government indeed, that is, the Power and Authority that Governors have, is from God, *By me*, ſays he, *Kings Reign, and Princes decree Juſtice*; Prov. 8. 15. and, *there is no Power but of* GOD, ſays the *Apoſtle*, Rom. 13. 1. but the Deſignation and Appointment of particular Perſons to the Adminiſtration of the Government, this is Humane; and the Diſtribution of the Power of Government into One, or into more Hands, this is likewiſe Humane: This is the Ordinance of Man only, and whatever is ordained by Man, is in its own Nature Alterable, and may at any Time be altered by the ſame Power that ordain'd it. I do not ſay, it may be alter'd by the ſame Perſons that ordain'd it, (for 'tis poſſible that by ſuch Ordinance the Power may be transferr'd from One Perſon to another, and what Power any Man has once given away from himſelf to another, he can't reclaim as in Right; he may receive it again as a Gift from him to whom he gave it, but he can't Challenge it again as his Due. I ſay therefore, I do not affirm, that whatever has been ordain'd by Man, may be alter'd by the ſame Perſons that ordain'd it) I only affirm, that it may be alter'd by the ſame Power that ordain'd it. I affirm, that the ſame Humane Power which has ſettl'd the Sovereignty in One Hand, may diſtribute it into ſeveral Hands, or if it has ſettl'd it in many Hands, it may take it thence and give it into One Hand; tho the ſame Humane Power which has made the Perſons of ſuch as have the Adminiſtration of the Government Elective, may ordain thas they ſhall be ſucceſſive: That ſame Humane Power that can ſettle a Crown in Entail, can alſo cut off the Entail off a Crown; that ſame Humane Power that can ſettle the Succeſſion of a Crown unconditionally, may appoint Conditions, without performing which he that is next Heir in Courſe ſhall not inherit; And whatever Eſtabliſhment of the Government the Supreme and Sovereign Power of any Nation makes in One Age, the Supreme and Sovereign Power for the time being of the ſame Nation, may in the next Age

make

make null and void. For the Supreme Power of every Nation, is, and muſt needs be in every Age lodg'd ſomewhere or other, and the Higheſt Power for the time being, may, for its own Time, make what Laws and Ordinances it ſelf pleaſes, as to the Settlement and Adminiſtration of the Government, which will be good Laws till they are repeal'd. But then the ſame Sovereign Power which has Authority to make a Law, has, and always muſt have as much Authority to repeal it; and no One Generation of Men can ever in ſuch Matters ſo binds the Hands, and reſtrain the Power of the Generations to come, but that they in their Time will have the ſame full Power to order Publick Affairs according to their own Liking, that the preſent Generation has. There being therefore no meer Humane Conſtitution but what in its own Nature is alterable (and I now take it for granted, that the particular Form or Manner of any Government is a meer Humane Conſtitution) it plainly follows, that the Precept in the Text, forbidding *to Change*, or, *to meddle with thoſe that are given to Change*, is not given to the Supreme Legiſlative Power, which may make what Changes in the Form of Government it thinks reaſonable; but only to meer Subjects, whoſe Duty it is to be quiet, and to ſubmit to the Powers that be; and who will act out of their Sphere, and in a Matter above their Capacity, in caſe they ſhall take upon them to unſettle that Form of Government, whatſoever it is, that is already eſtabliſh'd, or to frame and ſet up a new One.

The Supreme Legiſlative Power, where-ever lodg'd, is therefore no otherwiſe concern'd in this Precept, than only as in a Matter of Prudence; and ſo far indeed they are very nearly concern'd in it; it being rarely that any conſiderable Change can be made in the Form of a Government that has been long eſtabliſh'd, and under which the common wealth has proſper'd and flouriſh'd, without more Danger of Hurt than Hope of Good to the Community: An Alteration in the Government being like a Reparation in the Foundation of an Houſe, which if it be neceſſary to be made, muſt be made, and yet unleſs it be made very cautiouſly, can't be done without endangering the Downfal of the whole Fabrick. Whenever therefore the Supreme Power of any Nation undertakes to make any Change in the Eſtabliſh'd Form of Government, they ought in Prudence to be firſt very well ſatisfy'd that ſuch a Change is neceſſary; and they ought likewiſe wiſely to foreſee all the Conſequences that may probably follow from ſuch a Change, and to be well aſſur'd, that there will be more Good than Hurt in it: But when they are well ſatisfy'd in this, they may then, without any Breach of Duty or Juſtice, make ſuch Alterations therein as they judge needful; they do no more than they have full Power and Authority to do in making ſuch a Change, and it is the Duty of Subjects to acquieſce in the Wiſdom of their Superiors.

And the Reaſon why I have now mention'd, and inſiſted ſo largely upon this Point, is (as I have already hinted) not only in order to give you the true Meaning (as I conceive) of this Precept, *Meddle not with them that are given to Change*; But likewiſe to give Eaſe and Satisfaction to the Conſciences of Men, as to ſome Alterations that have been lately made in the Government of our own Nation.

For

For you all know, (I shall not need to tell you that,) that the Supreme Legislative Power of this Nation, is by the Constitution lodg'd in the King or Queen for the time being, and in the Two Houses of Parliament; that what is Enacted by their joint Authority, is a Law of the Land, and that nothing is a Law of the Land to which they do not all Three give their Consent: And in this Essential and most Fundamental Constitution of the Government, there has not (*God* be thanked) been made, and I hope never will be made, any Change or Alteration. But as to the Succession to the Crown, there have been of late made some very considerable Limitations; and well had it been for the Nation if the same had been made an Hundred Years sooner. For whereas formerly the Crown descended of Course to the next in Blood, without any Exception, Condition or Limitation; it is now limited to descend to the next Heir that is a Protestant; and thereby not only One Person in particular who is of uncertain Birth, but likewise several others of the Popish Religion, of whose Legitimacy there has been no Doubt, are debarr'd and excluded from the Succession; and it is also declar'd to be a Forfeiture of the Crown, for any one that is possess'd of it to be reconcil'd to the Church of *Rome*, or to marry wit a Papist. I.W.M. *& Sess.* 2. *c.* 2. 12. W. III

Now this, you know, is what some amongst us have stumbled at: First, such a Change, they think, ought not to have been made; and, secondly, now that it is made, they think, it is Null and Invalid.

But the first of these is a Point which I am at present no Ways concern'd to enquire into; neither, I think, are you: They that have Power to make such a Change are the best, they are indeed the only proper Judges of the Prudence, the Reason, the Necessity of it.

All therefore that I am concern'd to do, in order to give Ease and Satisfaction to the Consciences of those Subjects who have any Doubts or Scruples about the Matter, is only to shew, that they who made this Alteration as to the Succession of the Crown, had Power sufficient to make it, and consequently, that now it is made it is valid and Binding; so that all those who are oblig'd by Law to declare (as all Persons in Place and Office now are) that they do not believe, that any Person hath now any Right or Title to the Crow of this Realm, otherwise than according to this Settlement of the Succession, may safely and with a good Conscience make this Declaration.

For this I take to be an undoubted Truth, that no Man has a *natural Right* to any thing in this World more than to the Necessaries of Life: Whatever Right any Man has to Estate or Dignity, or Dominion, except only over the Fruit of his own Body, is meerly Humane; that is, 'tis a Right that is given by the Law of the Land or the Constitution of the Realm; thus, That the Eldest Son should inherit all his Father's real Estate, is no Law of Nature, for by Nature all his Children have Right alike; and even here with us, where this is the general Law of Inheritance, yet there are real Estates in some Places, that descend after another manner, all to the Yonger Son, or to all Sons alike; and in some other Countries perhaps, the whole real Estate of every Person, after the Decease of the Possessor, may revert to the Crown from which it was granted, and the Exchequer or Publick

lick Treasury may be also the sole Heir to his Personal Estate, And if no Man has a Natural Right to an Estate, much less can he have a Natural Right to Government, I mean, out of his own Family; 'tis the Supreme Power of every Nation that gives this Right to whom it pleases, and in such Manner as it pleases; 'tis this Supreme Power of every Nation that establishes in several Nations a different sort of Government, and which in Monarchies makes the Crown of one Nation to be Elective, and of another Successive; and which in Hereditary Monarchies, excludes, in one Country, all the Females and their Issue, and, in another Country admits the next in Blood to inherit, whether Male or Female, and in the same Proximity of Blood, prefers the Male before the Female. And I never yet heard it offer'd to be prov'd, that any of these Condirions or Limitations of Succession to a Crown, were Breaches of a Law of Nature or Violations of a natural Right.

Now therefore, if this be true. That no Man as a Natural Right to the Government of a Kingdom, it remains, that the only Right which any Person hath thereto must be a Legal Right, that is, such a Right as is given him by the Law and Constitution of the Realm; and the Law can give no Right any longer than while it self is in Force; and the same Sovereign Legislative Power that can make a Law, has as much Authority to repeal a Law; and the Law which gives any such Right, being by sufficient Authority repealed, the Right which was solely founded upon that Law, must needs become Null and Void: For the Right having no other Foundation but that Law, that Foundation being remov'd by the Repeal of the Law, the Right that was built upon that and nothing else, must needs fall to the Ground.

To me therefore it seems very plain, that whatever Right, either that particular Person, of the Legitimacy of whose Birth there is so much Doubt, or any other Person or Persons whatsoever, that are nearer of Kin to the Crown than that Family is on which it is now entail'd, had or might be suppos'd to have had, in Case there had been no Change made in the Laws relating to the Succession, it is by the Change that has been now made in those Laws clearly cut off and destroy'd; so that now we may truly declare, that neither he nor they, who by this last Law are excluded, have any Right or Title whatsoever to the Crown of this Realm; For no Right ever had they, or could they have but by Law, and the Law has now given this Right from them to others; and the Supreme Legistive Power of the present Time, has certainly as much Power and Authority to grant this Right of Succession to whom it will, as the same Legislative Power of the former Times had.

So that I think no Person can now have any reasonable Doubt of the Lawfulness of making this Declaration, which all in Places and Offices are Bound to make, unless he doubts whether this last Law, so limiting the Succession to the Crown, be a Law of the Land; that is, whether it was enacted by the Supreme Legislative Power of the Nation, viz. the King and the Two Houses of Parliament, in whom, according to our present Constitution, the Supreme Legislative Power is most certainly lodg'd. And to him who has any Doubt in his Mind whether or no this be a Law of the Land, I have little to say but this, that if he himself don't remember the making of the Law, (which I suppose most us'd it) he may look into the Statute Book, and see if it be not there printed with the Rest; or he may, if he has still a Mind to be more certain of it, search the Records, and see if the Original Act be not there entred and kept as one of the Laws and Statutes of this Realm. Or if this won't satisfie, I leave him to be told by the Lawyers (for 'tis not within my Profession to tell him that) that according to the Constitution of our Government, as it now is, and as it has been for several Hundred Years past, the King for the time being in Possession of the Crown, and recogniz'd and acknowledg'd by the States of the Realm, is (without further Enquiry into other Titles) Lawful and Rightful King, at least so far as that an Act of Parliament pass'd by him is a Good and Valid Law: This I suppose the Lawyers will tell him; this I'm sure they must say, or else they must grant that well nigh half the Statutes, not only of the present, but of former Time, according to which they Plead, and according to which the Civil Right of the Subjects are judicialy determin'd, are not good Laws and Statutes.

Thus I think I have made it appear, that this Precept, Meddle not with them that are given to Change, does not reach the Duty of Sovereign Powers, who may Lawfully make what Changes and Alterations in the Frame and Constitution of the Government they themselves think fit; but only of Subjects, whose Duty it is to be Quiet and Con-

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tented in their Station, and to ſubmit to that Form of Government which is eſtabliſh'd, believing (as the *Apoſtle* teaches) that *there is no Power but of* GOD, that *the Powers that be are ordained of* GOD, that *whoſoever reſiſteth the Power, reſiſteth the Ordinance of* GOD, and that *they that reſiſt ſhall receive to themſelves Damnation.*

And now I come to ſpeak very briefly to the Two Points before propos'd to be ſpoken to, in order to the Explication of the Third and Laſt Branch of the Wiſe Man's Adviſe to his Son, *Meddle not with them that are given to Change, viz.* to enquire 1. Who they are that may be ſaid to be *given to Change*; And, 2, What it is to *meddle with ſuch Men.*

I. Who they are that may be ſaid to be *given to Change.*

1. Firſt of all, This they certainly are who are uneaſie in that State of Subjection which God has plac'd them in, who think themſelves better able to govern the Kingdom than thoſe are in whoſe Hands Providence has depoſited this Care; For they who have this Conceit of themſelves, and yet according to the preſent Eſtabliſhment are never like to be called to the Government, or to any Share of it, can't but wiſh the Deſtruction of the preſent Eſtabliſhment, in Order to make Room for themſelves to come in. *O that I were made Judge in the Land, that every Man which had any Suit or Cauſe might come unto me, and I would do him Juſtice*; ſo ſaid *Abſalom*, 2 *Sam.* 15. 4. He thought the Adminiſtration of the Government not ſo well manag'd by his Father *David* as it would be by himſelf; and this fond ſelf conceit naturally put him upon endeavouring to Dethrone his Father, and to place himſelf in his Room.

2. They may be ſaid to be *given to Change*, and do ſufficiently ſhew that they are ſo, who tho' they do not expreſs ſuch an high Opinion of themſelves, yet are ever expreſſing a very low and mean Opinion of thoſe in whoſe Hands the Government is plac'd; who make it their Buſineſs to pry into, and enquire out all the Overſights or Miſcarriages of the preſent Adminiſtration, (and what Government is there, or ever was there ſo perfect, in which there have not been ſome Overſights or Miſcarriages;) who ſet themſelves to divulge and ſpread abroad all the ill Things they know or have heard concerning their Governors; who on all Occaſions magnifie every little Failing, aggravate every ſmall Miſcarriage, judge of the Prudence of every Undertaking by its Succeſs; and if any Enterpriſe that is taken in Hand miſcarries, will never ſuffer ſuch Unſucceſsfulneſs to be attributed to Change, or Providence, or any other Cauſe, but either to groſs Ignorance or Unskilfulneſs, or wilful Male-Adminiſtration. For to what Purpoſe is all ſuch Talk, but only to diſcontent Mens Minds, to render them uneaſie in their Station, and to diſpoſe them to attempt a Revolution? They who allow themſelves to talk at this Rate, have, it may be too much Wit to venture the Burning of their own Fingers; but if they can influence and perſwade others to it, that will anſwer their End as well. If they can but move others to Mutiny and Sedition, they make no Doubt but they ſhall afterwards find good Fiſhing for themſelves in the Troubled Waters; and that if they can but influence the Ignorant, and eaſily Miſguided Multitude to pull others down, they ſhall afterwards be able with Eaſe to ſet themſelves up.

3. They may yet more truly be ſaid to be *given to Change*, at leaſt, they do more plainly ſhew themſelves to be ſo, who if they can find no Faults in the Adminiſtration of Publick Affairs, do without Scruple make them; who ſet themſelves to Forge and Frame any Lies that may do hurt concerning the Counſels, the Actions, or the Perſons of their Governors: in order to poſſeſs Mens Minds with unreaſonable Fears and Jealouſies, thereby to render the Perſons of their Governors Odious, and their Government Weak and Precarious. But

4. They eſpecially are moſt evidently *given to Change*, or rather they are more than given to it, they are actually attempting it; who in Caſe of any, whether True or Suppos'd, Diſorders of State, go out of their own Way and Sphere to rectifie or redreſs them; this they certainly do, who being meer Subjects, do uſe any other Means to get their Grievances Redreſs'd, than only Prayers and Tears. What Power they may exert for this Purpoſe, who have any Portion of Share of the Legiſlature veſted in them as with us, each Houſe of Parliament manifeſtly has, I will not take upon me to ſay; they know beſt the Extent of their own Power, and upon what Occaſions, and in what Degrees it is neceſſary or proper to exert it, in order to preſerve the Balance that is eſtabliſh'd by the Conſtitution: But it is manifeſtly irregular for meer private Subjects, to gather together in Tumults, or to break out into open Rebellion againſt the Sovereign Power, on Pretence of doing themſelves Right: This is a conſiderable Advance towards a Change, and in Probability (how Oppreſſive ſoever the preſent Government is) toward a Change much for the worſe: The Miſeries of Anarchy, Confuſion, and Civil War, being commonly much greater, and more univerſally felt, than the Miſeries occaſion'd by the Tyranny and Oppreſſion of any Government:

Theſe are ſuch as may be ſaid to be *given to Change*. And,

2. They who may truly be ſaid to *meddle with thoſe that are given to Change*, are ſuch who give them any manner of Encouragement in this their Irregular Proceeding; that is, who gladly give ear to their Uncharitable, Malicious and Falſe Reports; who love to hear the Government blacken'd and defam'd; who are well pleas'd that the Miſchief is done by other Hands, which they themſelves, for their own Safety ſake, were afraid to undertake. They do give them ſtill greater Encouragement, who ſuffer themſelve to be cheated into an Opinion of ſuch Mens Honeſty, by the loud Pretences that they make of Zeal for Liberty and Religion, indeed, were it not for ſuch abuſed and miſled People as theſe no Sedition would ever be very formidable. But they, above all, may moſt truly be ſaid *to meddle with ſuch as are given to Change*, who join and take part with ſuch whoſe open Deſign it is, (no Matter upon what ſpecious Pretences) to diſſolve the preſent Government, and to ſet up a new One: They who do thus meddle with ſuch as are *given to Change*, are no whit better than thoſe are whom they join with and may juſtly expect the ſame Reward; even that mention'd in the Verſe following the Text, *Their Calamity ſhall riſe ſuddenly, and who knoweth the Ruin of them both.*

I ſhall obſerve but one thing more concerning the Precept in the Text, I mean,

mean, the Two laſt Branches of it; *Fear the King*, and, *Meddle not with them that are given to Change*: and this I ſhall do, only in order to deduce one very Juſt, and I think alſo Uſeful, and very Seaſonable Inference from the whole, and ſo conclude.

It is this; That theſe Two Branches of the Wiſe Man's Advice, as they are given to none but Subjects, (for the King himſelf is not to fear the King, and they who have the Power of the Government may lawfully, as I have ſhewed already, not only attempt, but make Changes in it, if they ſee Cauſe,) ſo they are plainly given to *all* that are meer Subjects; and that whether the King be ſo good a King they could wiſh for or no, or whether the Government be as gentle and perfect as it might be or not; For the Text takes no Notice of the Perſonal Qualification of the King, neither of his Wiſdom and Vertue, nor of his Want of them, nor yet of the Excellencies or Imperfections of the Goveenment; but it ſpeaks in general of any King for the time being, when it commands Subjects to fear their King; and it ſpeaks of any ſort or kind of Government that for the time being is regularly Eſtabliſh'd, when it forbids the Subjects to meditate or endeavour the making Alteration in it.

Now if it be the Duty of Subjects to fear their King, even tho' he be not ſo good an One as they could wiſh, and not project or undertake to make any Change in the Government, even tho' it be for the better (for that to be ſure is what all ſuch Medlers do think, at leaſt, 'tis what they will not fail to give out;) If it be the Duty of meer Subjects to take theſe Things as they find them, becauſe none can regularly go about even to reform the Government but the Sovereign Power, or at leaſt only ſuch Perſons as have ſome Share of the Sovereignty lodg'd in them; and then only according to that Meaſure thereof which they have, and within thoſe Bounds which are ſet to their Power by the Conſtitution; much rather are all meer Subjects bound, both in Duty and alſo in Intereſt, to Fear and Obey a Good and Gracious Severeign, and not only to be Quiet and Contented, but very thankful too, if they have the Happineſs to be under a Government that can't be mended, a Government that ſeems as Perfect as a Humane Conſtitution can be. And this (*God* be thanked) is, in both theſe Reſpects, manifeſtly our Caſe at this preſent time. For,

1. As to the Conſtitution of our Government, that is certainly the beſt in the whole World; The *Utopians* would be hard put to it ſo much as to imagine a better: 'Tis a Conſtitution wherein the Power of the Sword is fully lodg'd in the Sovereign, and yet with all the Security that can be that it ſhall never be Miſ-us'd; whereby the Right and Prerogatives of the Crown, and the Liberties and Properties of the People are with equal Care preſerv'd: wherein the Sovereign has all the Power that can be to do Good, and none to do Hurt, In a word, it is a Conſtitution, during the continuance whereof, the People can never be Enſlav'd and Ruin'd but with their own Conſent, by Repreſentatives of their own Chooſing; and it may be reaſonably hop'd, that they will never be ſo fooliſh as to give their Conſent to their own Deſtruction. And yet,

2. If this might be ſuppos'd, we ſhould nevertheleſs be ſafe from pre-

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ſent Ruin, having (God be thanked, and on this Day of Her Majeſty's Happy Acceſſion to the Crown we have, more eſpecially, Reaſon to be thankful for it; having, I ſay) ſuch a Sovereign now on the Throne, as might ſafely be Truſted with the higheſt and moſt unlimited Prerogatives, becauſe we are morally aſſur'd, ſhe never would uſe them but to promote the Good and Welfare of her People. A *QUEEN* that is intirely in the Intereſts of her People, and can't reaſonably be ſo much as ſuſpected to have any Intereſt of her own diſtinct from theirs. A *QUEEN*, that has been remarkably careful about Matters of Piety, and expreſs'd the moſt earneſt Deſire to tranſmit to Poſterity the ſame excellent Religion that is Eſtabliſh'd among us. A *QUEEN*, that is ſo far from endeavouring to Enrich her Self by the Spoil of her Subjects, that She has not only been beyond Example, Provident in the Management of the Publick Treaſure, but alſo as Frugal in Her own Expences as with Decency, and with the Preſervation of the Honour of the Crown ſhe could be, with this only Deſign, that She might ſpare as much as was poſſible out of her own Revenue towards the Publick Uſe, that ſo Her Subjects might be the leſs burthen'd.

But it would be endleſs to ſay all that might be ſaid upon this Subject, I'm ſure without Flattery, and I verily believe, without the Suſpicion of it; and I am ſenſible I have already kept you too long.

I ſhall therefore only add this one thing more, *viz.* That being ſo extremely Happy as we now are, both in the Conſtitution of the Government and in the Adminiſtration of it; we have nothing elſe to do, but to be thankful to God for theſe Bleſſings, to endeavour to walk worthy of them, and to pray for their Continuance: And in order to this laſt, to put up our hearty Supplications to the Throne of Grace, that God would be pleas'd to grant the *QUEEN* a long Life, and to direct Her Counſels, and proſper Her Endeavours for the Publick Good; And that when He ſhall be pleaſed to tranſlate Her hence to a better Kingdom (which for our own ſakes we can't but wiſh may not be in our Time) he will then bleſs our Poſterity with a Succeſſion of ſuch Princes (and, if it may be, from her own Body) who like Her may Govern Wiſely and Live Vertuouſly, and by the Authority both of their Laws and of their Godly Example, may perfect that Reformation which (ſuch is our preſent Corruption both as to Principles and Morals) it is to be fear'd Her Reign alone tho' we wiſh it may be a very long one) will not be ſufficient to accompliſh.

And may GOD of his Infinite Mercy vouchſafe to hear and grant theſe our Petitions, for the Sake of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. To whom, &c.

FINIS.